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REMARKS

Claim 1 and 2 are independent.

In order to expedite prosecution, independent claims 1 and 2 have been amended to further clarify the distinction between the present invention and cited prior art. For example, claim 1 recites in pertinent part, "forming a circuit pattern by selectively etching the metal foil of the metal laminated board to form a circuit board" (claim 2 recites similar feature), support for which can be found for example on page 13, line 23-page 14, line 3 of Applicants' specification. According to the claimed combination, the present invention can make it possible to prevent etching solution from soaking into the board during the pattern forming process by selective etching. As described on page 5, line 8 - page 6, line 3 of Applicants' specification, the present inventors have recognized that the creeping of the etching solution into the board can deteriorate the process whereby the reliability of the circuit board can be affected. Only Applicants have recognized and considered this issue, and conceived of a novel configuration which can make it possible to obviate said issue.

Indeed, one of the features of the present invention is directed to enabling the elimination of contamination of *specifically* the etching solution into the pores of the board *made by partial heating and pressing*, as disclosed in the background of the invention section of Applicants' specification. The claims have been amended to clarify this distinction. On the other hand, Watanabe is completely silent as to the problem relating to an etching solution remaining in the board.

Moreover, Noguchi discloses only a method to fabricate a circuit board by a continuous production process. In this regard, it should be noted that Noguchi is at best directed merely to the conventional two-step heating and pressing process in which resin which flows out is

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removed by cutting off the portion along with the copper foils sandwiching the resin.

Accordingly, Noguchi has no need or desire to avoid flow out of the resin by the two-step curing so as to be completely unrelated to the particular combination set forth in the pending claims.

"All words in a claim must be considered in judging the patentability of that claim against the prior art." *In re Wilson*, 165 USPQ 494, 496 (CCPA 1970).

Under Federal Circuit guidelines, a dependent claim is nonobvious if the independent claim upon which it depends is allowable because all the limitations of the independent claim are contained in the dependent claims, *Hartness International Inc. v. Simplimatic Engineering Co.*, 819 F.2d at 1100, 1108 (Fed. Cir. 1987). Accordingly, as the independent claims are patentable for the reasons set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that all claims dependent thereon are also patentable. In addition, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are patentable based on their own merits by adding novel and non-obvious features to the combination.

Based on the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are patentable over the cited prior art. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

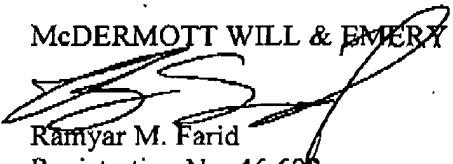
Having fully and completely responded to the Office Action, Applicant submits that all of the claims are now in condition for allowance, an indication of which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

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To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

McDERMOTT WILL & EMERY LLP



Ramyar M. Farid
Registration No. 46,692

600 13th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005-3096
Phone: 202.756.8000 RMF:MaM
Facsimile: 202.756.8087
Date: November 25, 2008

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as our correspondence address.**